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LETTER DATED 27 SEPTEMBER 1994 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWEDEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to enclose herewith a letter dated 26 September 1994 from the Chairman of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) Minsk Conference and Minsk Group, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I would be grateful if you could arrange for the letter to be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Peter OSVALD
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Sweden to the United Nations

Annex

Letter dated 26 September 1994 from the Chairman of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Conference and Minsk Group addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to operative paragraph 8 of Security Council resolution 884 (1993) and after consultations with the Chairman of the Council of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), Mr. Antonio Martino, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Italy, I wish to report on the present efforts made by the CSCE Minsk Group to achieve a peaceful settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict.

The cease-fire of 12 May, agreed to after mediation efforts of the Russian Federation, is largely being respected. The parties committed themselves, on 27 July and 28 August, to observe the cease-fire until a wider political agreement is concluded. A cease-fire is, however, only a first step towards lasting peace.

The mediation efforts, the respect for the cease-fire and direct contacts between the parties have contributed to a growingly positive atmosphere, increasing the possibilities for achieving a durable settlement. For instance, a number of civilians held as hostages were released in early September. The concerned parties have announced their intention to continue to release such hostages.

Together with representatives of the CSCE Chairman-in-Office and the Initial Operations Planning Group of CSCE, I visited the region from 14 to 19 June 1994. During the visit, the parties reaffirmed their desire to attribute a central role to CSCE in the continued negotiations and to see all mediation efforts closely coordinated. Political and military security guarantees were thoroughly discussed.

Between 23 and 29 August, I again visited the region. During this visit, efforts concentrated on achieving a consolidation of the cease-fire and on further exploring the main political issues at the highest possible level.

A consolidation of the cease-fire was achieved during this visit through commitments by the parties to observe the cease-fire until a more comprehensive agreement is concluded. The numerous in-depth consultations held with the leadership of the parties indicated that important gaps remain on major issues. The parties agreed, however, on the need for a stronger CSCE presence in the region and on their clear preference that the military security provided should have a multinational character.

An informal meeting of the CSCE Minsk Group, which the Russian Federation regrettably could not attend, was held at Vienna from 12 to 14 September 1994. The meeting was preceded by discussions between me, as Chairman of the Minsk Group, and the parties. Among the subjects discussed were political and military security guarantees, strengthened integration of mediation efforts,

CSCE presence in the region, humanitarian assistance and confidence-building measures.

At the meeting of the Minsk Group, the parties underlined that they regarded CSCE as a main actor in the negotiating process and reaffirmed their wish for a stronger CSCE presence in the region. As a first step, a multinational diplomatic and military delegation led by the Deputy Chairman of the Minsk Group will tentatively visit the region in early October.

The parties also reiterated their commitment to the document on confidence-building measures agreed to at the informal meeting of the Minsk Group at Prague on 14 and 15 April 1994. I am recommending that a section concerning confidence-building measures be part of a wider political agreement.

The representatives at the meeting stressed the importance of strong and relevant political security guarantees to an agreement. Such guarantees would reduce the extent of guarantees of a military nature needed and should involve the parties and neighbouring countries, as well as international organizations and institutions. Close cooperation with the Security Council is particularly important on this point.

Military security guarantees should be provided in the form of CSCE monitors and a multinational peace-keeping force. The parties reiterated at the Minsk Group meeting their support for a military presence with as strong an international character as possible.

The participants in the meeting urged me, in cooperation with the members of the Minsk Group, to pursue actively the possibility of organizing a multinational CSCE force under the Helsinki Document provisions of 1992, with the CSCE Chairman-in-Office, relevant CSCE institutions and individual CSCE participating States and also to plan for its timely implementation.

As a first step, I raised this issue at the meeting of the CSCE Committee of Senior Officials at Prague on 15 September. The committee of Senior Officials decided on 16 September to request the CSCE Chairman-in-Office, assisted by the Chairman of the Minsk Group, to take necessary steps to explore actively the possibility of organizing a multinational CSCE peace-keeping force in the framework of chapter III of the Helsinki Document of 1992. Military experts met at Vienna last week to examine this matter more closely. An informal meeting of the Permanent Committee of CSCE on this matter is scheduled for this week.

Furthermore, the parties again stressed their strong wish for harmonized mediation efforts. An informal meeting of the Minsk Group of Nine (the Minsk Group without the parties) on 7 and 8 July 1994, requested the Minsk Group Chairmanship to work out a consolidated peace plan. Several contacts have taken place since this meeting in order to integrate further the CSCE and Russian mediation efforts. Some progress has been made. Continued discussions concern questions relating to the application of CSCE principles of peace-keeping in the event of a joint monitoring with the Commonwealth of Independent States/Russian Federation of a withdrawal, the respective roles of, inter alia, CSCE and the Russian Federation, as well as the provision of appropriate security guarantees.

A further integration of the mediation efforts is essential for achieving a lasting solution and I will continue to work towards this objective. I acknowledge with appreciation the support expressed by the members of the Security Council for the work further to integrate CSCE mediation efforts with those of the Russian Federation. The efforts of the Russian Federation constitute a crucial contribution to the peaceful settlement of this conflict. CSCE preparedness remains high to deploy monitors to observe a cease-fire as part of a wider agreement.

Humanitarian needs in the region are considerable. The approaching winter will add further to the suffering of the displaced persons and refugees. I have at every possible occasion pleaded for increased humanitarian aid to the region and for facilitating the access of such assistance to the area. The United Nations consolidated appeal for the Caucasus in May 1994 was received positively by donor countries, but should be given continued substantial support.

I shall continue to inform the Security Council and the Secretariat of the further work of the Minsk Group. I am grateful for the reaffirmation of the support of the members of the Security Council for the CSCE mediation efforts, as expressed in your letter of 17 June 1994. Representatives of the United Nations Secretariat are welcome to attend all future meetings of the Minsk Group.

The strong desire of the parties for a peaceful solution, manifested through their adherence to the cease-fire, underlines the urgency of finalizing a viable consolidated plan for a peaceful solution to this tragic conflict.

Perhaps more than ever, we find ourselves at a critical phase in the peacemaking efforts, where all good forces should unite to take advantage of the present positive momentum and thereby avoid an unsatisfactory, and even dangerous, freezing of the present situation.

(Signed) Jan ELIASSON
Ambassador
Chairman of the CSCE Minsk
Conference and Minsk Group